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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 ANTANANARIVO 000643

SIPDIS

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PARIS FOR WBAIN  
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MA](#)  
SUBJECT: MADAGASCAR'S COUP LEADER FACES RENEWED  
DEMONSTRATIONS

REF: A. ANTANANARIVO 634  
[1](#)B. ANTANANARIVO 618

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF DOVIE HOLLAND FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D.

[1](#)1. (S) SUMMARY: Following the High Transitional Authority's (HAT) unilateral formation of a purportedly "consensual and inclusive" (but substantially unchanged) government on September 8 (ref A), Madagascar's three other major political movements have joined forces to condemn the HAT's actions and call for a return to international mediation, while former president Zafy has threatened a return to street protests if their request is ignored. There is a growing consensus that HAT President Andry Rajoelina severely miscalculated in his decision to retain Roindifo Monja as Prime Minister and proceed unilaterally, with increasing indications that key elements in the military may be prepared to withdraw support for him in the face of an increasingly unified opposition, rising international condemnation, and the growing possibility of renewed demonstrations. In order to put the negotiation process back on track, one increasingly likely scenario would have Rajoelina stepping down "voluntarily" (albeit under intense pressure from the military), eliminating the problem that blocked an agreement at Maputo II, and allowing a return to the negotiating table. Alternatively, he could still save himself by belatedly agreeing to a truly consensual prime minister. Post has indications that he may revisit this latter decision, and, in another positive signal, late on Thursday, September 10 he agreed behind closed doors to resume negotiations with the three other movements on Sunday. END SUMMARY.

THE RAJOELINA-MONJA TANDEM - A FATAL MISTAKE?

[1](#)2. (C) It has been a week since Rajoelina announced his intention to form a new government unilaterally, essentially knocking the Maputo Process off the rails. The international community has condemned the move via both the International Contact Group, as well as separate statements from SADC, the UN, France, and the US. Opposition political parties have refused to participate in the government (announced on September 8), with Ravalomanana and Ratsiraka labeling as "traitors" those who broke ranks and accepted the handful of positions not reserved for the HAT. Civil society groups and respected academics also have spoken out against the move, some questioning its legal justification, others simply decrying the failure of Rajoelina and his Prime Minister, Roindifo Monja, to comply with even the sketchy details agreed upon at the Maputo II talks (ref B).

[1](#)3. (C) The three main opposition movements (of Zafy, Didier Ratsiraka, and Marc Ravalomanana) are united in their opposition to Rajoelina's "new" government, but for the

moment, their unity appears to extend no further than agreeing to push the HAT back to the negotiating table. Prior to Rajoelina's speech on September 4, Zafy announced that the three other groups were prepared to accept having the military fill the top three positions in the administration, as a route around the Maputo II impasse. Zafy, and politicians affiliated with his movement, continue to present the three groups as united, and preparing to announce a parallel government of their own. However, Fetison Andrianirina Rakoto, a leader within the Ravalomanana movement, later indicated to Emboff that this was not be the case. In an meeting with the ambassador on September 11 (septel), Zafy himself made no claims to the existence of any common platform, nor of any current move to develop a consensual list of nominees for a parallel government. Until they actually announce a parallel government, opposition unity cannot be taken for granted, even in the face of current challenges.

#### SEVERAL POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO GROWING INSTABILITY

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14. (S) With the mediation process sidelined, and the opposition parties growing desperate as the HAT further entrenches itself, the situation in Antananarivo may again become unstable. Following up on Zafy's proposal last week for the military to appoint key leaders, Zafy ally Pierrot Rajaonarivelo outlined a scenario to the ambassador on September 9 in which renewed street protests in the city center would give the military an excuse to intervene - causing not a "military coup", in his words, but rather an opportunity for them to "assume responsibility" to stop an otherwise certain downward spiral into violence and

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international sanctions. Rajaonarivelo stated that the military had already lost faith in Rajoelina, but was not prepared to simply take power - they are (justifiably) concerned of being blamed for the current state of the economy, the lack of international recognition, and further cuts in assistance programs and trade deals that would follow a continued failure to resolve this crisis. This scenario would allow them to paint themselves as saviors, although the ability of military leaders to solve this crisis any faster than civilians is not a given - nor is the extent to which the international community would see it as progress.

15. (S) A more palatable option for many would be the resignation of Rajoelina, either of his own volition, or with as strong a nudge as necessary from the military. The major blockage at Maputo II was the HAT insistence that they retain both the President and the Prime Minister positions; this would allow them to walk back from that demand, and restart negotiations where they left off in August after Maputo I. It is not clear how Monja would react to this scenario, but it would permit talks to start again, and provide a face-saving way to reopen discussion of a unity government.

16. (S) However, in a September 10 meeting with the ambassador and representatives of France, Germany, and the European Union, Rajoelina gave no indication that he had any intention of stepping down, asking instead for support as they implement their transition regime and work towards elections (septel). Shortly afterwards, however, transition Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs Ny Hasina Andriamanjato informed the Ambassador privately that Rajoelina took their negative reaction seriously, and was prepared to restart talks with the other movements on Sunday, September 13 in response to a 72-hour deadline announced by Zafy earlier that day. He also repeated that Rajoelina was ready to give up Monja as Prime Minister - but that was a well-known position prior to Maputo II, and Rajoelina has repeatedly proven unable to unseat Monja, even with the promise of another high profile position in the transition government.

17. (S) There are several far less ideal scenarios that could play out, depending on actions over the next several days.

At present, it remains unclear whether the other movements will lead protests in the city center, whether the military is as unified as some opposition leaders suggest, and how much appetite there really is for further agitation on all sides. Should Rajoelina remain in office, and the military decline to take control, there is the possibility that the opposition movements will gain momentum, and succeed in holding larger demonstrations. The response of the security forces, however, is more likely to resemble the rapid (and less violent) interventions of April and May, rather than the violent disarray of January and February that only served to provoke the protesters further. A more remote possibility is that a continued stalemate could push the other movements out to the provinces, in what could eventually resemble the Antananarivo/Tamatave standoff of 2002. Political contacts have routinely invoked such dire possibilities since the beginning of the crisis, although they have remained firmly hypothetical. If a stalemate persists, however, and the HAT resists further engagement, Ratsiraka and Zafy may be tempted to move out of the capital to their political bases on the coast.

#### TOO LATE FOR A TIMELY EXIT?

18. (S) COMMENT: If Andriamanjato's message proves correct, and Rajoelina is seriously considering a return to the negotiating table and the replacement of his Prime Minister, next week could begin on a more positive note, and a way out of the larger crisis could emerge, following the Maputo Process. At time of writing, however, Zafy was not yet aware of any response from Rajoelina, and it remains possible that infighting within the HAT will derail that initiative. Pressure will mount today and tomorrow with planned rallies both at Magro, north of city center, and a renewed demonstrations on Democracy Square in central Antananarivo. Security forces turned out early, blocked access to the square, and used tear gas to disburse the 500-700 protesters who had assembled. (As a precautionary measure, Mission has issued an updated security alert advising all Americans to remain vigilant and to avoid certain parts of town until further notice.)

19. (S) Should that fail, Rajoelina's resignation (forced or

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voluntary, per para 5) could be the least bad scenario. Although it would not resolve all the work left unfinished at Maputo I, it would at least provide a peaceful path forward. South African Ambassador Monaisa told the ambassador that SADC lead mediator Joaquim Chissano had advised Rajoelina to step down in a telcon from TGV during the Kinshasa SADC Summit. Chissano's voice will not be easy to ignore -- but TGV consistently puts more weight on reacting to difficult dynamics within the HAT. Rajoelina now ironically finds himself in a similar predicament to that of his deposed predecessor in March - stepping down might not be appealing to him and his supporters, but staying put could make things even worse. END COMMENT.  
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